

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 25, line 14, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Q' In addition, by so doing, the accumulation time of the signal charges in the photodiode groups 41A, 41B, 41C, and 41D is made shorter than that in a conventional AF system that acquires focal error information at lens positions from each screen of image signals. As described above, however, because the photodiode groups 41A, 41B, 41C, and 41D in the embodiment are exposed over the periods T1, T2, T3, and T4 overlapping with each other by half period, the charge accumulation time is relatively long. This compensates for a decrease in the level of the image signal read from each of the photodiode groups 41A, 41B, 41C, and 41D, which enables not only the focal error information to be sensed positively but also the AF evaluation value to be calculated reliably and the in-focus position to be determined with certainty.
